

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE

EPPING UNION

Rural Sanitary District,

FOR THE YEAR 1895.

CHELMSFORD:

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ANNUAL REPORT

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MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE

Epping Union Rural Sanitary District,

FOR THE YEAR 1895.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present to you the following Annual Report upon the Epping Rural Sanitary District for the year 1895.

With the termination of the previous year there came an important change in the constitution of the District. Chingford and Buckhurst Hill, having elected to become Urban Districts, were severed from it, and the area was thus reduced from 48,099 acres to 43,826, whilst the population, which had been returned for the whole district in the census of 1891 as 26,137 persons, was reduced to 19,270. The estimated annual increase from 1891 to the middle of 1895 brings the population up to 19,895, and upon this figure the various statistical calculations to be found at the end of this Report have been based.

Besides these changes, it has recently been decided by the Essex County Council, with the sanction of the Local Government Board, to form the Epping Special Drainage District into a separate Urban District, the Council for which is to be elected in the month of April next.

As a consequence of these changes, this Annual Report will be the first and last required for the district as it now is, and whatever public benefits may accrue, one cannot but regret the break in the continuity of the statistical returns which we have been able to produce regularly for twenty years in succession, and from the comparison of which many valuable deductions have been made. The sub-division of the district into a number of smaller areas, with consequent smaller populations, has also the disadvantage of reducing the value of such deductions.

In previous Annual Reports the district has been arranged under the three sub-registration districts of Chigwell, Epping, and Harlow; and as the Birth and Death returns are still made separately for each of these districts, it will be convenient in this report to adhere to the same arrangement. The area of these districts is now as follows:

Chigwell, 9,686 ; Epping, 17,101 ; and Harlow, 17,039 acres. The respective populations and statistical information will be given further on, and need not here be alluded to. Neither is it necessary to describe the general geological and topographical characters of the district, as these have been stated in previous Annual Reports.

Proceeding now to an account of the work done during the year, we come first to

(II.)—Periodic Inspections

Of which it must be admitted there were but few of a "systematic" description. The unsettled position of the district, and the uncertainty hanging over its future, have not been conducive to the performance of sanitary duties in the same routine manner as formerly. Inspections of the different parts of the district were, however, made as follows, viz. :—In February, March, and April in Loughton, Harlow, and Epping ; May, June, and July in Epping, Theydon Garnon, Theydon Bois, North Weald, Chigwell Row, and Roydon ; August, September, and October in Theydon Garnon, Theydon Bois, Epping, North Weald, and Loughton ; November and December, Loughton, Epping, Theydon Garnon, and Theydon Bois.

(III.)—Sanitary Improvements effected.

As a result of the foregoing inspections many improvements more or less important have been effected, but many have been hindered by the state of transition through which the district is passing, as will be seen more especially when we come to speak of the subjects of drainage and water supply.

Nine cottages were condemned as unfit for human habitation under the Housing of the Working Classes Act. Four of these were at North Weald, and these were immediately put into habitable repair by the owner. Two were at Chigwell Row and two at Epping, all of which have been closed. With reference to one at Theydon Bois, legal proceedings were taken, but these were rendered nugatory through some legal technicality as to ownership.

Nuisances caused by keeping pigs in overcrowded or otherwise unsuitable situations have been numerous. Prohibitive orders were obtained in two instances, and in others the necessary alterations were made after notices had been issued. Some serious cases of overcrowding came under notice in Theydon Garnon, Chigwell Row, and North Weald, each of which was abated under notice from the Sanitary Inspector. The conveyance of London manure and refuse into the district has been the cause of serious nuisances, and on more than one occasion there was a strong suspicion that it had been the cause of severe illness amongst children. The matter was brought to the notice of the Railway Company concerned, and after inquiry it was agreed that no more such manure should be conveyed in the manner complained of.

Dairies and Cowsheds have been inspected, and in two instances the latter have had to be condemned as unfit for the purpose of keeping cows. Slaughter yards have also been inspected. These are generally well arranged and cared for, but in one instance where complaint had been made of the manner of disposing of the offal alterations had to be insisted upon.

Other improvements effected during the year will be gathered from the following statement by Mr. Bell :—

INSPECTOR'S STATEMENT.

Inspections and re-inspections	...	...	...	...	760
Notices served to abate or remove nuisances	...	...	...	...	339
Letters <i>re</i> notices, drainage, water supply, &c.	...	...	...	...	723
Certificates granted for new houses under Water Act	...	...	...	...	27
Number of houses certified	...	...	...	...	39
,, house drains reconstructed and connected to sewer	...	...	...	...	70
,, houses disinfected after infectious diseases	...	...	...	...	48
,, new houses connected to public sewer	...	...	...	...	44
,, old privy and other cesspools filled up, &c.	...	...	...	...	40
Number of samples of drinking water submitted to M.O.H.	...	...	...	...	18
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, Public Analyst	...	...	...	...	1
,, dairies, cowsheds, and milkshops on register	...	...	...	...	48
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, registered during the year	...	...	...	...	8
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, Notices to M. O. H. <i>re</i> nuisances, &c.	...	...	...	...	13
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, under Housing of Working Classes Act to	...	...	...	...	10
make dwellings habitable	...	...	...	...	10
,, houses under notice to be made habitable	...	...	...	...	21
,, proceedings taken under Act before justices	...	...	...	...	1
,, houses under proceedings	...	...	...	...	1
,, ,, made habitable after notice	...	...	...	...	14
,, ,, closed by owner	,,	,,	...	...	7
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, Notices as to letting new houses without certificates	...	...	...	...	10
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, to abate overcrowding in dwellings	...	...	...	...	11
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, to register cowsheds and dairies	...	...	...	...	5
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, to discontinue burning refuse, &c....	...	...	...	...	2
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, carting offensive refuse and	...	...	...	...	1
manure	...	...	...	...	1
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, pumping liquid manure at	...	...	...	...	1
improper times...	...	...	...	...	1
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, cleanse, drain, and improve	...	...	...	...	1
cowshed	...	...	...	...	1
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, cleanse culvert	...	...	...	...	1
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, <i>re</i> dangerous buildings	...	...	...	...	1
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, to cleanse water tanks	...	...	...	...	2
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ditches	...	...	...	...	12
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, and pipe same	...	...	...	...	2
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ponds	...	...	...	...	5
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, fill up ponds	...	...	...	...	1
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, cleanse and drain premises	...	...	...	...	14
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, protect, and cover over	...	...	...	...	11
wells	...	...	...	...	11
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, and limewash slaughter-	...	...	...	...	3
houses	...	...	...	...	3
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, and limewash bake-	...	...	...	...	4
houses	...	...	...	...	4
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, and disinfect premises	...	...	...	...	25
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, privies and w.c.	...	...	...	...	5
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, close wells for domestic use...	...	...	...	...	5
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, connect house and w.c. drains	...	...	...	...	39
to sewer	...	...	...	...	39

Number of Notices to convert common privies to w.c.'s	...	10
"	"	1
"	"	12
"	"	4
"	"	2
"	"	11
"	"	2
"	"	7
"	"	18
"	"	1
"	"	39
"	"	21
"	"	18
"	"	5
"	"	1
"	"	8
"	"	18
"	"	56
"	"	4
"	"	31
"	"	10
"	"	4
"	"	56
"	"	31
"	"	3
"	"	7
"	"	26
"	"	69
"	"	5
"	"	46
"	"	20
"	"	7
"	"	1
"	"	19
"	"	42
"	"	3
"	"	10
"	"	5
"	"	23
"	"	10
"	"	5
"	"	2
"	"	1
"	"	17
"	"	22

Signed

JOHN H. BELL,

Inspeetor.

(IV.)—*Action taken to prevent the Spread of Infection.*

The notifications of Infectious Diseases received during the year are classified in the following Tables to show the localities and the periods of the year at which the diseases have occurred:—

Table of Notifications for each Sub-District.

Sub-District.			Smallpox.	Diphtheria.	Membranous Croup.	Erysipelas.	Scarlet Fever.	Typhoid Fever.	Puerperal Fever.	TOTALS.
CHIGWELL	...	...	2	16	1	5	12	5	1	42
EPPING	...	...		2		8	21	3		34
HARLOW	...	...		1		4	22	2		29
WORKHOUSE	...	...						
TOTALS	...	...	2	19	1	17	55	10	1	105

Table of Notifications for each Month.

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	TOTALS.
Smallpox	...	1	1										2
Diphtheria	...	4	1	2			2	4	2	1	3		19
Membranous Croup.										1			1
Erysipelas	...	3	3		1	1	2			2	1	4	17
Scarlet Fever		2	3	11	6	6	7	10	5	5	5	55	
Typhoid Fever	1	1	1	1				1	2		3	10	
Puerperal Fever			1										1
TOTALS	8	3	6	6	1	13	9	12	10	16	9	12	105

SMALLPOX.

Two cases of this disease occurred at Loughton, and were due to infection contracted in London. Objections were raised to removal to Hospital in the first case. A village nurse was had in, who caught the disease, and was removed to the Highgate Hospital. The other inmates of the houses were promptly re-vaccinated, and the outbreak ended there.

SCARLET FEVER.

This was again the most prevalent of the notified infectious diseases in the district during the year. There was reason to believe, too, that many of the milder cases escaped notification. The history of several cases of Nephritis, and of some of the severer attacks of Scarlet Fever, not unfrequently revealed the fact that they had been preceded by mild cases of the disease in the same household. The localities most affected were Roydon, Epping, Theydon Garnon, Loughton, and Chigwell. The parishes of Magdalen Laver, Nazeing, Latton, Matching, and both Parndons escaped altogether. The months during which the disease was most prevalent were June and October. During January, March, and May no cases were notified. The epidemic was generally of a mild type, only one death having been attributed to it, but it would not be right to take this as the full measure of the mischief inflicted, as a large proportion of those who suffer from a mild attack have subsequently to endure the painful effects of one or other of its various sequels. It should be remembered, too, that from a merely economical point of view the continued presence of the disease, even in a mild form, is a grave misfortune for the district. It will be seen that a considerable number of the cases were removed to the Isolation Hospital, and where this could not be done all possible precautions were taken to prevent infection spreading. In the Roydon outbreak it became necessary to close the schools for some weeks.

DIPHTHERIA.

There were 19 cases of this disease notified, 11 of which occurred in Chigwell, 4 in Loughton (1 at a Convalescent Home), and the remainder were distributed between Epping, Theydon Garnon, Theydon Bois, and Sheering. During the first six months of the year there were only seven cases, but during the last six there were as many as twelve. In the months February, May, June, and December no cases were notified. In one instance at Chigwell, and another at Sheering, the disease was clearly imported. It is generally recognised now that there are other closely allied affections of the throat which can only be distinguished from true diphtheria by means

of a bacteriological examination of the secretion from the throat or nasal passages, but only in one instance was the diagnosis of the disease reported to have been confirmed by such examination. It is most desirable in future that these examinations should be more generally made both at the commencement and termination of the illness, and as Dr. Thresh, our County Medical Officer, is now prepared to carry them out in his laboratory at a very small cost, there is no reason why they should not be made. There were but two cases of diphtheria removed to the Isolation Hospital.

TYPHOID FEVER.

The ten cases notified were distributed as follows, viz.:— Chigwell, 3; Loughton, 1; Theydon Bois, 1; Epping, 3; Harlow, 2. In each of the months January, March, May, June, and September one case was notified. In October there were two, and in December three. The other five months were free. The disease was imported in two of the Epping cases, as it probably was, also, in the Harlow case. In only one instance was the disease found to be directly associated with insanitary conditions in the district; in others the source of the disease remained undiscovered. None of these cases were removed to the Hospital, but all were carefully isolated in their own homes, and every precaution was taken to prevent the disease spreading.

Of the other zymotic diseases, Measles caused four deaths. The disease was imported into Theydon Bois by London children, a matter which will be referred to later on. Diarrhoea caused 16 deaths, 12 of which were of children under five years of age, and seven of these occurred in Chigwell. Influenza caused eight deaths, which was a decrease upon previous years, and the general indications appeared to be that this disease is wearing itself out.

Returns of notification certificates have been sent regularly each month to Dr. Thresh, by whom they have been tabulated with others from the rest of the county, and a copy of each of these tabulated returns, together with a meteorological report, is forwarded immediately to each District Medical Officer of Health in the county, who is thus kept well up to date in these important matters.

ISOLATION HOSPITAL.

The following table gives particulars of each case received into the Hospital during the year:—

No.	Date of Admission	Sex.	Age.	District from which received.	Nature of Disease.	Remarks.
1	June 25	Female	23 yrs.	Broadley Com.	Scarlet Fever	Discharged Aug. 9
2	„ 25	Female	14 „	„	„	„ „ 3
3	„ 25	Female	9 „	„	„	„ „ 3
4	„ 25	Male	18 „	„	„	„ „ 3
5	„ 26	Male	7 „	„	„	„ „ 3
6	„ 26	Male	3 „	„	„	„ „ 9
7	„ 26	Female	7 „	„	„	„ „ 9
8	„ 29	Male	25 „	„	„	„ „ 9
9	July 3	Male	25 „	Harlow	„	„ July 17
10	„ 18	Male	14 „	Broadley Com.	„	„ Aug. 16
11	„ 18	Female	19 „	Harlow Com.	„	„ „ 29
12	Aug. 5	Female	9 „	Broadley Com.	„	„ Sept. 11
13	„ 10	Male	1 $\frac{7}{12}$ „	„	„	„ „ 11
14	„ 11	Male	4 $\frac{1}{3}$ „	Buckhurst Hill	Diphtheria	Died Aug. 11
15	„ 12	Female	3 „	Broadley Com.	Scarlet Fever	Discharg'd Sept. 11
16	„ 29	Female	19 „	Roydon Hamlet	„	„ Oct. 3
17	Sept. 17	Male	12 „	Broadley Com.	„	„ „ 28
18	„ 27	Male	14 „	Theydon Garn.	„	„ „ 28
19	„ 27	Male	7 „	„	„	„ „ 31
20	„ 27	Female	4 „	Epping	„	„ Nov. 4
21	„ 30	Female	10 „	Theydon Garn.	„	„ „ 4
22	Oct. 1	Female	3 „	Broadley Com.	„	„ Oct. 31
23	„ 4	Female	17 „	Loughton	Diphtheria	„ „ 23
24	„ 22	Female	9 „	Theydon Garn.	Scarlet Fever	„ Dec. 7
25	„ 23	Female	5 „	Epping	„	„ „ 4
26	„ 28	Male	11 $\frac{3}{4}$ „	Harlow	„	„ „ 12
27	„ 30	Female	6 „	Theydon Garn.	„	„ „ 7
28	„ 30	Female	4 „	„	„	„ „ 7
29	„ 31	Male	8 „	„	„	„ „ 7
30	Nov. 1	Female	11 „	„	(Nil) „	„ Nov. 5
31	„ 8	Female	7 „	Epping	Scarlet Fever	„ Dec. 14
32	„ 8	Male	5 „	„	„	„ „ 14
33	„ 26	Female	21 „	Loughton	Diphtheria	„ „ 14
34	Dec. 17	Female	15 „	Buckhurst Hill	Scarlet Fever	„ Jan. 16

Of the 34 cases it will be noticed that the only fatal one was that of a child from diphtheria. The circumstances attending this case call for some notice. It appears that by the severance of the Chingford and Buckhurst Hill Urban Districts from the parent district, their right to the use of the Isolation Hospital came to an end, but by an arrangement these districts were still to be allowed to send cases to the Hospital under specified regulations. Early one Sunday morning a telegram was received to the effect that the case of

Diphtheria referred to was being sent from Buckhurst Hill, and preparations were at once made at the Hospital for its reception. Unfortunately, when the child arrived it was in a dying state, and lived only a little over two hours after coming in. A difficulty afterwards arose about the cost of burial, and this has led to a proposal for the formation of an Hospital District in accordance with the provisions of the Isolation Hospital Act of 1893.

(V.)—Cause and Distribution of Disease.

As regards Zymotic diseases, there is not much to add to what has already been stated. One special source of infection, however, in this district should be referred to, namely, the custom of boarding out London children in cottage homes. In the month of August six of these children were lodged with a poor woman living at Ivy Chimneys, Theydon Bois, who had two young children of her own. Within a few days one of these London children developed Measles in a severe form, and upon inquiry it transpired that the disease had been prevalent in the district from which she had been brought. The poor woman's children caught the disease, from which one of them died. Other cases also occurred in the neighbourhood, of which two died. In previous reports I have suggested that this custom of boarding out London children in country districts ought to be under the direct supervision of the Local Authority, and this case points to the necessity for such supervision. There should be some check upon children being imported in large numbers from infected districts, as well as some guarantee that they are only received into suitable and healthy homes.

We have no special industries affecting prejudicially the health of the people in this district, and if we could only secure for our rural population better house accommodation, and in some instances better drainage, and a better water supply, we should have done much towards perfecting our sanitary condition.

(VI.)—Sanitary Requirements of the District.

Better house accommodation for our working classes is urgently required. Part 3 of the Housing of the Working Classes Act, which enables Local Authorities to provide houses, has not been adopted for this district, and if it had I fear the experience of other Authorities does not afford much encouragement. It appears that all that can be done at present is to try to improve the condition of existing houses. Many of these are only fit to be condemned, but

what is the use of condemning if by so doing we compel the poor people to move into other houses and thereby aggravate the evils of overcrowding already prevailing to a serious extent in the district? Next to the subject of better housing of the people comes the important one of providing better drainage. In my last Annual Report reference was made to the new sewerage which it was understood was about to be provided for Theydon Green and Woburn Avenue, and in the month of May last I had to remind your Council that such sewerage was urgently required. Unfortunately nothing has yet been done in this matter. New sewerage is also much needed for certain parts of the parish of Chigwell to take the place of the present illegal method of discharging crude sewage into the river Roding. Public sewerage is also required for the Ivy Chimneys and the Epping portion of Theydon Garnon. This is a want which continues to make itself more felt each year, and in the month of August last it became necessary to call attention to it. It was then decided, however, by your Council that the matter was one which should be left over for the new Urban Council to deal with. It certainly should be one of the first for that Council to attend to. In other parts of the district, such as Potter Street and Sheering, public sewerage is required. Special attention was called to these villages in last year's report, but so far no action has been taken.

The question of water supply has been one of much anxiety during the past year, especially for so much of the district as is supplied, or is reputed to be supplied, by the Herts and Essex Company. By the remarkable frost of the early part of the year, not only were supply pipes and cisterns frozen and damaged, but the water mains themselves were burst in all directions; the consequence being that during the continuance of the frost scarcely any water was obtainable from this source, and people were at their wits' end to know what to do. Old disused wells had to be re-opened, and long distances had to be traversed to obtain the most meagre supply. With these experiences upon them, people did not hesitate to blame the Local Authority for having, as they said, closed so many surface wells in times past, and much unmerited reproach was cast upon the Authority, as well as their officers. As a matter of fact, the Authority had not been at all successful in their attempts to close these surface wells, not more than two or three having been closed by Justices' orders throughout the whole district. But even had the Authority been as successful as was suggested, the accusation based upon such an argument is unjustifiable, because in the action the Authority had taken they were only fulfilling their proper functions under the Statute.

When the long period of frost at last came to an end matters were not much better, for so much damage had been done to the mains and water pipes that nothing remained but a general disorganisation of the whole system of supply, which continued

throughout the greater part of the summer. That this should have been so calls, I think, for some explanation upon the part of the Water Company. We are assured that there is an abundant supply at command, and that the machinery of the Company is capable of sending 200,000 gallons per day into the district. Why, then, was a water famine allowed to occur at the very season of the year when it must necessarily be most acutely felt? One thing is certain, namely, that should this Company continue to show itself unable or unwilling to supply water proper and sufficient for all reasonable purposes, in the words of the Act, it will be found that the resources still at the command of the district are by no means exhausted.

With the strong feeling engendered by this state of affairs, it should be no matter for surprise that an attempt which was subsequently made to close a certain polluted well in Epping ended in something like an ignominious failure. This well, which supplies a large number of people in the centre of the town, had been shown to be most seriously polluted with sewage, but as it was not shown to the satisfaction of the Justices that injury to health to any great extent had resulted from the use of it, the closing order applied for was refused. Clearly the Act of Parliament requiring such injury to be proved needs amendment, for, so long as it remains as it is, it will be useless for Medical Officers of Health to expose polluted water supplies in their districts, among the conditions prejudicial to the health of the people, as it is their duty to do. When the proceedings in this case were known to have failed, the matter was brought before the Epping Parish Council, by whom a resolution was unanimously passed pointing out to the Rural District Council that the houses (18 in number) supplied by this well were without a wholesome water supply, and calling upon them to proceed under Sec. 3 of the Public Health (Water) Act, 1878. This, however, led to no further action, your Council being of opinion that the matter had better be left to the new Urban Council. Few persons will be inclined to disagree with this decision. The whole question of the water supply and drainage of the town of Epping must be taken up sooner or later by the new Urban Council, and the sooner the better. A wholesome water supply must be substituted for the present sewage-polluted wells. Cesspools must be got rid of, and every house in the town must be properly connected with the sewerage system. These matters, intimately affecting the present and future reputation of Epping, are among the most important which the new Council will be called upon to deal with.

(VII.)—*Special Reports made during the Year.*

1.—*May.*—*Re* Public Sewerage for Theydon Green and Woburn Avenue.

2.—*May.*—*Re* Houses unfit for human habitation at Theydon Bois and North Weald.

3.—*June.*—*Re* Failure of Herts and Essex Water Company to maintain a proper supply of water in the district.

4.—*July.*—*Re* Outbreaks of Scarlet Fever at Roydon, Harlow, and Thornwood Common.

5.—*August.*—*Re* complaints of dangerous nuisances caused by pollution of a stream at Ivy Chimneys.

The adopted Acts in force in the district are:—

- (1.) Infectious Diseases (Notification) Act, 1889.
- (2.) „ „ (Prevention) Act, 1890.
- (3.) Public Health Amended Act, 1890.
- (4.) Prevention of Cruelty to, and Protection of Children Act 1889.

Proceedings have been taken before Justices in six cases, viz. :

- (1.) To provide additional w.c. accommodation. Order made.
- (2.) „ connect house drains to sewer.
- (3 & 4.) „ prohibit keeping pigs. ,
- (5.) „ close dwelling houses unfit for habitation. „,
- (6.) „ close polluted well. No order made.

Vital Statistics.

BIRTHS.

The births registered during the year were 495, giving a birth rate of 24.8 per 1,000 upon the estimated population. For the sub-districts the birth rates were as follows:—

Chigwell	...	...	...	...	25.8	per 1,000.
Epping	...	...	...	...	23.5	„
Harlow	...	...	...	...	25.0	„

DEATHS.

There were 279 deaths registered, giving a total death rate of 14.0 per 1,000. The death rates for the sub-districts were as follows:—

Chigwell	13.9	per 1,000.
Epping, excluding Workhouse and						
Hospital	11.9	„

Harlow	12.6	„
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INFANT MORTALITY.

There were 53 deaths of infants under one year of age. The rate of infant mortality measured by the proportion of deaths under one year to births registered was equal to 107.0 per 1,000. For the sub-districts the rate was as follows:—

Chigwell	...	...	...	...	146.5	per 1,000.
Epping	...	...	...	...	89.0	„
Harlow	...	...	...	..	63.2	„

ZYMOTIC DEATH RATE.

The principal zymotic diseases caused 33 deaths, viz.:—Scarlet Fever, 1; Diphtheria, 6; Typhoid Fever, 2; Measles, 1; Whooping Cough, 4; Diarrhoea, 16. The rate of mortality due to these diseases was equal to 1.6 per 1,000.

Tables A and B, classifying deaths, new cases of sickness, &c., are appended to this report.

I am, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

TREVOR FOWLER,

L R.C.P.I., D.P.H., &c.,

Medical Officer of Health.

TO THE EPPING RURAL
DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Epping, February 20th, 1896.

A) TABLE OF DEATHS during the Year 1895, in the EPPING RURAL DISTRICT, classified according to DISEASES, AGES, and LOCALITIES.

B) TABLE OF POPULATION, BIRTHS, AND OF NEW CASES OF INFECTIOUS SICKNESS, coming to the knowledge of the Medical Officer of Health, during the year 1895, in the Epping Rural District; classified according to DISEASES, AGES, and LOCALITIES.

(H) Locality in which Infectious Hospital is situated.

